

# COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

WORKING WITH CHURCHES IN  
TRANSITION

# Before the PNC is elected...

- Step #1: Support the Session's securing of pastoral support for immediate needs
- Step #2: Consult with the Session re: Mission Review and Temporary Pastor Leadership Needs
- Step #3: Recommend to COM
- Step #4: Guide the Session in preparing to Secure Temporary Pastoral Leadership
- Step #5: Search for Temporary Pastoral Leadership
- Step #6: Secure Temporary Pastoral Leadership
- Step 7: Recommend to COM re: Elect a PNC!

# Step #1: Pastoral Support for Immediate Needs

- Pulpit Supply options and costs  
(invitation to IEP to preach early in the transition)
- Pastoral care: both emergency and on-going
- COM appoints Moderator
- Board of Pensions considerations

# Step #2: Consult With the Session

**Purpose:** Build a relationship of trust that supports the congregation's discernment about its future ministry and mission and prepares the congregation for the search for its next pastor.

- **Process:** Outline the process for discerning the mission review and temporary pastor leadership needs of the church during this time of transition
- **Preparing the soil:** through prayer and conversation that grounds this season of transition in God's Word and Spirit.

# Step #2: Consult With the Session

## **In Discernment of Mission Review Needs: How will you....**

- Assess the congregation's resources, gifts and passion
- Consider the needs, challenges, and opportunities of the community served by the church
- Discuss the current pastoral needs of the congregation
- Name any on-going or unresolved factors currently impacting the life and health of the congregation

# Mission Review

In discernment of the church's mission review needs:

Video: Mission Studies

Resources:

- Research Strategies (see document)
- Church [Trends](#)
- Community [Demographics](#)

# Full Mission Review

- Process typically designed and led by the Interim pastor
- Important to engage the whole congregation
- Groundwork that informs the PNC (when elected) to support writing of MIF
- Written report approved by Session, then by COM
- See “Working with Churches in Transition” document for content to be included

# Modified Mission Review

- What other (recent) resources will inform the report?
- Decide who will lead a process that engages the congregation - Session? COM liaison? IEP?
- Groundwork that informs the PNC (when elected) to support writing of MIF
- Written report approved by Session, then by COM
- See “Working with Churches in Transition” document re: list of content to be covered



# Step #2: Consult with The Session

## **In discernment of temporary pastor leadership needs:**

- Review the “Definitions of Pastoral Relationships” and policy on exceptions
- Describe the specialized ministry provided by a trained interim pastor.
- Discuss the congregation’s financial situation relative to full or part-time pastoral service
- If appropriate, name the option of a Commissioned Ruling Elder
- Formulate a recommendation to bring to COM

# Step #3: Recommend to COM

COM liaison brings a recommendation based on the findings of the consultation:

- Shall the church complete a full or modified Mission Review?
- What form of temporary pastoral leadership will best serve the church during this time of transition? Will the church be served by full-time or part-time temporary pastor?
- NOTE: In churches for which a full mission review is recommended, it is almost always the case that a trained interim pastor will also be recommended.

# Step #4: Prepare to Secure Temporary Pastoral Leadership

Upon recommendation of COM, the Session begins the search for Temporary Pastoral Leadership:

- Session identifies the Search Team (could be the whole Session, a sub-set of Session or sub-set of Session and congregation). The TP will be hired by the Session (no congregational vote required).
- Session reviews the Covenant of Agreement, sets the rate of compensation and decides upon the parameters of the position.
- In consultation with COM and IEP Search Team advertises:
  - Locally: Write a brief description of the church, its community and the pastoral needs to be met by the temporary pastor; Email to the Interim Executive Presbyter for circulation among neighboring presbyteries
  - Nationally: Complete a Ministry Information Form and post to the Church Leadership Connection at [pcusa.org](http://pcusa.org)

# Step #5: Search for Temporary Pastoral Leadership

- Search Team identifies potential candidates and conducts initial interviews (phone, skype, in person)
- Search Team does additional research on candidates: sermons, references, on-line exploration
- Before conducting face-to-face interviews with pastors who are not members of Carlisle Presbytery, Search Team notifies the Interim Executive Presbyter, who conducts an Executive Reference Check.
- When arranging for on-site and/or Neutral Pulpit interviews with 'final' candidates, the Search Team arranges for an interview with COM representatives.

NOTE: To experience worship leadership of final candidates, by prior arrangement the Search Team may visit a candidate in the place he/she is currently serving OR arrange for a neutral pulpit location. It is NOT recommended that candidates be invited to preach at the church for which they are under consideration.

## Step #6: Secure Temporary Pastoral Leadership

- Search Team extends invitation to chosen candidate, including proposed terms of call
- Upon acceptance, Search Team brings Covenant of Agreement to Session for approval
- Session requests time on COM docket; Session and candidate meet with COM;
- COM acts on the Covenant of Agreement

NOTE: If the candidate is not already a member of Carlisle Presbytery, he/she submits a Statement of Faith and one page biographical statement to COM and is interviewed for membership in the Presbytery.

## Step #7: Recommend to COM re: Elect the PNC!

- When Mission Review Report (full or modified) is complete and has been approved by the Session, request time on COM docket
- Representatives of Session and/or Mission Review team bring report with request authorizing election of PNC
- After authorized by COM, church nominating committee prepares a slate of nominees
- Session calls a congregational meeting to elect PNC
- Once elected, IEP and COM liaison offer training/orientation to PNC